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Peru: The congressional by-election on 12 November in Lima Department will reflect to some extent the effect of the continuing political and economic crises on the popularity of President Belaunde and his party.

The seat has been held by Belaunde's Popular Action Party, but the major opposition party, APRA, has an excellent chance of winning it this time. More than 40 percent of the Peruvian electorate votes in this department.

Despite requests from party supporters that he take an active role in the campaign, Belaunde has maintained his characteristic aloofness toward local elections. Except for several speeches to business and economic groups in which he denied the existence of an economic crisis, President Belaunde has refrained from rebutting opposition criticism of his handling of mounting problems.

Belaunde's detachment has led well-informed members of his party to express concern over the President's attitude in the face of current problems.

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NOTES

Cuba: Many "old-line" Communists have reportedly been arrested by the Castro regime in the past few months. Although the numbers mentioned-- perhaps 240 in Havana alone--are probably exaggerated, some of those named are second-echelon officials who have lost government positions since late summer. No reason has been given for the arrests, and no overt campaign against pre-Castro Communists had been noted since 1964. Renewed pressure against the "old-line" Communists would inflame long-held grievances between them and the "new" or Fidelista Communists. It would also add to the strain in Soviet-Cuban relations.

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*Congo (Kinshasa): Congolese President Mobutu has called an emergency meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Committee on Mercenaries Friday to discuss the evacuation of the mercenaries now in Rwanda. He also requested Rwandan President Kayibanda not to allow their evacuation until the OAU considered the matter. Mobutu has backed down somewhat in his demands for extradition of the mercenaries, and now says he will allow their evacuation provided specific conditions can be met. Whether Kayibanda will allow the mercenaries to remain on Rwandan soil until the OAU acts, however, remains uncertain.

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